

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church
September 19, 2021

Greetings brothers and sisters in Christ.

Worship at 10:30.

Worship will continue in the sanctuary and as long as we are at a substantial or higher transmission rate, masks are required at all times when you are in the building.

Procedures and Requirements for In-Door Worship

- Masks and social distancing are **REQUIRED** at all times when inside of the building.
- Three hymns will be sung. Masks are required when singing.
- Sign in on sign-up sheets that will be on the table as you enter the church.
- Pick up your bulletin and communion kit at the table in the Gathering Area
- Place your offering in the offering plate at the table in the Gathering Area
- Sit only in designated seating places (if you are sitting with more than two people, please sit on the sides)
- Greet and visit with people before or after worship outside
- The air conditioning will be on.
- The service will be on-line for those not yet comfortable being inside.
 - In order to not overload the internet, please either power down your phones or put them on Airplane Mode.
 - Also, so that the people who are joining us on-line can hear the congregational responses and announcements, a worship leader/reader will lead the congregational responses and all announcements must be made at the pulpit.

Worship Leaders – We are in need of people to help lead worship by reading both the congregational responses and the lessons. Please let Betty Nelson know if you are willing to volunteer.

If you have prayer requests, please send them to me so that I can include them in my weekly newsletters.

God's Work, Our Hands – October 12th.

We are assembling packages for our military families for God's Work-Our Hands Sunday, on Oct. 10th. Deadline to bring in items is Oct. 3rd.

Hygiene Items: dental floss, chap stick, small bottles of Tylenol or Advil, tooth paste in small tubes, Band-Aids, vitamin C tablets in small bottles, sunscreen in small tubes, cold meds in small bottles, blister packs, other medical items in small packets. No toothbrushes, hand sanitizer, or liquids.

Candy items: (all individually wrapped) hard candy, mints, chocolates, small candy bars, tootsie rolls, Hershey kisses.

Cotton socks-white or black, calf high, all sizes for adults.

These items have to be small enough to fit into a sandwich bag. They will then be packed into Christmas stockings. Boxes are available in the gathering area to receive your gifts. A grant of \$250. from Thrivent Financial will help us purchase items to "round out" what is needed to make up the contents for 100 stockings. The Witness Committee thanks you for your support of this project.

Yours in Christ,

Pastor Denise

Home Phone

610-750-6432

Cell/Text Phone

610-858-818

Genesis 21:1-3 and 22:1-14

The Lord dealt with Sarah as he had said, and the Lord did for Sarah as he had promised. ²Sarah conceived and bore Abraham a son in his old age, at the time of which God had spoken to him. ³Abraham gave the name Isaac to his son whom Sarah bore him.

After these things God tested Abraham. He said to him, “Abraham!” And he said, “Here I am.” ²He said, “Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains that I shall show you.”

³So Abraham rose early in the morning, saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and his son Isaac; he cut the wood for the burnt offering, and set out and went to the place in the distance that God had shown him. ⁴On the third day Abraham looked up and saw the place far away.

⁵Then Abraham said to his young men, “Stay here with the donkey; the boy and I will go over there; we will worship, and then we will come back to you.” ⁶Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on his son Isaac, and he himself carried the fire and the knife. So the two of them walked on together. ⁷Isaac said to his father Abraham, “Father!” And he said, “Here I am, my son.” He said, “The fire and the wood are here, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?”

⁸Abraham said, “God himself will provide the lamb for a burnt offering, my son.” So the two of them walked on together. ⁹When they came to the place that God had shown him, Abraham built an altar there and laid the wood in order. He bound his son Isaac, and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. ¹⁰Then Abraham reached out his hand and took the knife to kill his son.

¹¹But the angel of the Lord called to him from heaven, and said, “Abraham, Abraham!” And he said, “Here I am.” ¹²He said, “Do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me.” ¹³And Abraham looked up and saw a ram, caught in

a thicket by its horns. Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up as a burnt offering instead of his son. ¹⁴So Abraham called that place “The Lord will provide”; as it is said to this day, “On the mount of the Lord it shall be provided.”

Sermon

Grace and Peace to you from God our Father
and Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior. AMEN.

God of promise,
You stayed the hand of Abraham
and fulfilled the promise you
made to him, that he would
father a great nation. Keep your
promises to us, that we become
inheritors of eternal life. Amen.

This week's text is a tough one.
And we have taken quite a leap
forward from last week's text
where we went back to the
beginning of Creation. To get
from the text on Creation to this
morning's text, we have jumped
over the stories about the
Garden of Eden, Noah and the
building of the Ark and the
floods, and God's covenant with
Abraham where God promised
God would provide them with
land, God would create a great
nation from Abraham's
descendants and that this nation
would be blessed so that they
could be a blessing.

Only one problem with this
covenant that God made with
Abraham and that is that
Abraham and Sarah were way
beyond their childbearing years
and Abraham and Sarah had no
children. Which meant that
Sarah would need to give birth to
a son so that God could fulfill the
promises of the covenant that
God made with Abraham.

God did keep God's promise to
Abraham and Sarah and Sarah
did give birth to their one and
only son, who they named Isaac.
And that is where we find
ourselves in this morning's text
with this story about Abraham
and his son Isaac.

A text that is actually quite
disturbing in so many ways. As,
we hear in this text that
Abraham has had another
conversation with God and this

time God is telling Abraham to do the unthinkable.

As God says to Abraham - "Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and sacrifice him there as a burnt offering at the place on the mountain that I shall show you."

What??? God is telling Abraham to kill his son.

How can this action of sacrificing his son be the will of God?

How will God keep God's promise to Abraham that his descendants will become a great nation, when the only rightful heir to the throne has been killed?

And what does Abraham do? Does he argue with God or even question God. No, Abraham just starts preparing to do as he is told and sacrifice his only son.

³So Abraham rose early the next morning, saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and his son Isaac; he cut the wood for the burnt offering and set out and went to the place in the distance that God had shown him.

When they reached the place that God had shown Abraham. Abraham said to the two young men, "Stay here with the donkey; the boy and I will go over there; we will worship, and then we will come back to you."

Those words really struck me as I read this. And then we will come back to you. Did Abraham really believe that WE will be coming back? Did Abraham really believe that God was going to change God's mind and Isaac would somehow be spared from becoming the burnt offering.

Then Father Abraham carrying the fire and the knife and his son Issac carrying the wood walked toward the place where Abraham would build the altar.

Isaac said to his father, “The fire and the wood are here, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?”

And Abraham answered, “God himself will provide the lamb for a burnt offering, my son.”

Is Abraham really telling the truth when he tells his son that he believes God will provide the lamb?

They get to the spot where Abraham builds the altar, puts the fire wood on, then binds his beloved son and lays him on top of the wood. Still no lamb in sight.

Abraham picks up his knife and is about to kill Isaac, when he hears the Lord call out to stop him “Abraham, Abraham! Do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me.” And in a nearby

thicket the bleating of a lamb is heard.

And even though God stops Abraham from killing Isaac, I am still having trouble with this story, because I am still having trouble with this “testing” God who would not only put this man Abraham through the torture of being caught between the will of God and the love of his son.

But also, this “testing” God who would have a father tie up his little boy and lay him on top of a pile of wood to be slaughtered as an act of obedience to God.

And then I remember the one who was slaughtered, the one who carried his own wood in the shape of a cross that would be used for his slaughter. I remember that this is the one who revealed to us the true character of God. Not a “testing” God, but a loving and compassionate God. A God who loves us so much that he made the unthinkable sacrifice of his son for us.

This loving and compassionate God who made a new covenant in his son Jesus' blood for us that eliminated the need for a "testing" God, if there was ever truly one in the first place.

Yes, without a doubt, our faith gets tested, but not by God. Our faith gets tested by the circumstances that this sinful and broken world throws at us.

And in those challenging times, we need to dig deep and have faith like Abraham that God is present with us and God will

provide. Faith that sound like what he told the two servants – WE (Isaac and I) will go and worship and then WE (Isaac and I) will return and as Abraham said to Isaac, God will provide the sacrificial lamb.

Which God not only did for Abraham and Isaac on that morning, but which God did and God continues to do for us each and every day, so that we may forever and for always live in right relationship with God.

AMEN

Blessing

May
The love of God,
The light of Christ,
And the joy of the Holy Spirit
Abide with you on this day
and forever more.
AMEN